

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listing of the claims in this application. Please amend the claims as follows:

1-14. (Canceled).

15. (Previously Presented) A method of disassembling a preloaded and interlocked assembly having a first element and a second element, the method comprising:

heating the first element comprising an initial dimension to a first temperature sufficient to expand the initial dimension to a first dimension, the first dimension greater than the initial dimension; and

removing the first element from the assembly

wherein the preloaded and interlocked assembly comprises at least one of the first element or the second element being deformed, wherein the first element can only be removed from the assembly when the first element reaches the first temperature, and wherein heating the first element from the assembly is a means to disassemble the assembly.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein a coefficient of thermal expansion of the first element comprises a first value and a coefficient of thermal expansion of the assembly comprises a second value, the first value different than the second value.

17-19. (Canceled).

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the first element is a metal having a thermal expansion coefficient of between approximately 10 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter and approximately 25 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the first element is fashioned from aluminum.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the first element further comprises a polymer.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the polymer has a coefficient of thermal expansion between approximately 0 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter and approximately 1000 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter.

24-31. (Canceled).

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein a means of heating the first element is one or more members selected from the group consisting of a hot liquid, a heating torch, an induction heating oven, a radiator, a heating pad, and a remote heating device.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein a means of heating the first element is one or more members selected from the group consisting of a hot liquid, a heating torch, an induction heating oven, a radiator, a heating pad, and a remote heating device.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the means of heating the first element is a hot liquid.

35-37. (Canceled).

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising
a preliminary step of heating the first element and adding the heated first element to the second element so as to create the preloaded and interlocked assembly such that at least one of the first element or the second element is deformed.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the preliminary step further comprises cooling the first element from a first temperature to a third temperature wherein the third temperature is lower than the first temperature and the third temperature is sufficient to contract the first dimension to a lesser third dimension to interlock the assembly.

40. (Previously Presented) A method of disassembling a preloaded and interlocked assembly wherein the assembly is comprised of a first element and a second element wherein at least one of the first element and second element is deformed, the method comprising:

heating the first element comprising an initial dimension to a first temperature sufficient to expand the initial dimension to a first dimension, the first dimension greater than the initial dimension wherein the first element and the second element are metals; and

removing the first element from the assembly when the first element reaches the first temperature

wherein the first element has a thermal expansion coefficient of between approximately 10 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter and approximately 25 micrometers per degree Celsius per meter.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Canceled)

43. (Previously Presented) A method of creating or disassembling a preloaded and interlocked assembly wherein the assembly is comprised of a first element and a second element, the method comprising:

heating the first element comprising an initial dimension to a first temperature sufficient to expand the initial dimension to a first dimension, the first dimension greater than the initial dimension wherein the first dimension allows

removal of the first element from the assembly thereby disassembling the assembly, or

coupling of the first element and the second element, wherein upon cooling of the first element from the first temperature to a third temperature, the first element contacts the second element causing a mechanical interference which deforms at least one of the first element or the second element, thereby creating the assembly.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 wherein the method is for disassembling the assembly.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 wherein the method is for creating the assembly.
46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the assembly is at least partially snap-fit.
47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the first element comprising the third dimension contacts the second element causing mechanical interference such that at least one of the first element or the second element is deformed to preload the assembly.
48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the preloaded and interlocked assembly remains assembled by frictional forces and mechanical interferences.
49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the first element contacts the second element such that no clearance exists between the first element and the second element.
50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the mechanical interference deforms the first element.
51. (Canceled)
52. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein
the first element comprises at least one protrusion positioned at an end of a corresponding beam; and
the second element comprises at least one end which contacts the corresponding at least one protrusion positioned at the end of the corresponding beam of the first element.
53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein the at least one protrusion positioned at the end of the corresponding beam is a first protrusion and the at least one end of the second element is a first end, and wherein the first protrusion contacts the first end.

54. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein at least one of the first protrusion or the first end is deformed.

55. (New) A method of disassembling a preloaded and interlocked assembly having a first element and a second element wherein the first element comprises a first protrusion positioned at the end of a corresponding first beam and the second element comprises a first end which contacts the first protrusion such that a mechanical interlock of the first protrusion and the first end securely couples the first element and the second element, the method comprising:

heating the first element comprising an initial dimension to a first temperature sufficient to expand the initial dimension to a first dimension, the first dimension greater than the initial dimension; and

removing the first element from the assembly

wherein the preloaded and interlocked assembly comprises the first protrusion and the first end being deformed, wherein such deforming is in an axial direction of the first element and the second element, and wherein the first element can only be removed from the assembly when the first element reaches the first temperature.